



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 11, 2021

Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB955 – Information

Delegate Kaiser and Committee Members:

My name is Katherine Berry. I am the Election Director in Carroll County and the co-chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. MAEO represents the local boards of elections throughout the State of Maryland. I am writing today representing myself and MAEO with information regarding HB955 – Election Law – Absentee Delivery and Marking.

This bill would eliminate the ability for any voter to request that a ballot be web delivered. Voters would be able to request their ballot by mail or in person.

Management of web delivered ballots at the local board level can be cumbersome to manage during the canvass of the ballots. Additional bipartisan teams are required to duplicate the web ballots that are printed on regular paper to ballot paper so that the vote can be tabulated. Since its implementation several election cycles ago, web delivery has become increasingly popular with the voters because it is convenient among other things. In addition to these added local board of elections tasks, this process is quite costly and time consuming.

Most of the MAEO membership agrees that providing access to the ballot continues to be imperative because we recognize there are various circumstances that require voters to get their ballot in a certain way. However, most of the MAEO membership also agrees that there is a fiscal burden on the county government and limited amounts of time to perform all required tasks before the election can be certified. We expect that absentee voting will become more popular since most voters successfully cast their by-mail ballot in 2020, so it is imperative that all stakeholders recognize and create a balance of easy voter access and cost effectiveness of this part of the vote-by-mail process.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact me at (410)386-2958 or Katherine.berry@maryland.gov.

www.maeo.net